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SUBJECT: TURKISH MEDIA REACTION
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 27, 2010

Media Highlights

US Embassy Ankara - Turkey Media Reaction - January 27, 2010 as prepared by the Public Affairs Information Office

In the Headlines

Taliban Opening From Karzai (Yeni Safak)
On the eve of the London conference, Turkish media focus in on remarks of President Gul and Afghan President Karzai at a joint press conference held 1/26 after the Istanbul Summit for Afghanistan's Neighbors. Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak headlines "Taliban Opening from Karzai," and, like all Turkish media, gives prominent play to President Karzai's remarks on reintegration: "Taliban who are not part of terrorist networks or Al-Qaeda are the sons of the Afghan soil and they all should be reintegrated." In "The Economy is the Priority," intellectual Islamist Zaman noted Turkey's \$200 million pledge for reconstruction in Afghanistan and highlights President Gul's remarks saying that "It is necessary to give Afghanistan economic support and strong support for their development approach." President Gul reiterated his comments on Afghanistan issue by saying "It is not possible to resolve the issues by only military means. It is necessary to gain the hearts of Afghan people." Mainstream Hurriyet headlines "Combat Troop Message from Gul to Obama" and quotes the Turkish president as: "Military measures are not sufficient to establish peace and stability in Afghanistan. President Karzai doesn't want the children of the other countries to die for Afghanistan." Media also play up Karzai's remarks, in response to a reporter's question, regarding US Ambassador to Afghanistan's comment that the Karzai Administration is an "insufficient strategic partner." In "Karzai Upset with Washington," mainstream Milliyet says Karzai responded by saying "if the partnership defined here is as bowing to US will, then, he is right, we will never be a sufficient partner for the US. The US is the richest country; we are the poorest country. A strategic partnership, however, is a cooperation mechanism between two sovereign countries." A statement released after the meeting by the participants emphasized: "We support the Afghan national process of reconciliation and reintegration in accordance with the Constitution of Afghanistan in a way that is Afghan-led and -driven." Turkish media report that the regional summit was

attended by Afghan President Karzai, his counterparts from Pakistan and Turkey and senior officials from Iran, China, Tajikistan, Russia, Krygystan, the UAE and the UK.

In "Taliban Opening" Milliyet columnist Sami Kohen observes a general consensus over "finding a political solution to the Afghanistan problem." He notes that Turkey thinks the same, and he concludes: "Karzai's plan requires both internal efforts and strong international contribution to end the war in Afghanistan through social and political measures. If this strategy becomes successful, it will also set a model in finding methods to terminate terrorism problem."

Asli Aydintasbas of Milliyet carried excerpts from her interview with British Foreign Secretary David Miliband who is in Istanbul for the Afghan conference. Commenting on current political debates in Turkey about alleged coup plans, Miliband praised Turkey's strong commitment to democracy. Regarding Afghanistan, Miliband emphasized the importance of efforts to find a political solution "by gaining rebels and put them back into the societal life." According to Milliyet, Miliband said the following: "On this issue, the purpose is not to establish another Taliban government. The purpose is to regain the rebels in a comprehensive integration process based on the Afghan constitution. We want to see a strong Afghanistan, strong enough to be able to defend itself. Rebels should be able to express their problems through political system and there has to be a separation between them and supporters of Al Qaeda."

Reacting to a report about "Karzai being upset with Washington," a blogger commented in mainstream Milliyet's website: "What kind of

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leadership is this? A genuine leader will never allow a foreign troop in his country and will not facilitate the killing of people in the first place. Can Berk."

How the US is Playing

Praise for US in Haiti: In "Another Miracle in Haiti," NTV praises US soldiers rescuing a man who had been buried in rubble for two weeks. Mainstream Hurriyet calls it "14th Day, A Miracle Again," and highlights "Rico Dibrivell, 35, had been trapped since the Jan. 12 earthquake, he was pulled from the rubble by the US soldiers." Meanwhile mainstream Sabah in "UN, EU Calls for Caution," expresses UN and EU concern over "the safety of thousands of orphans after Western nations began speeding up adoption procedures in the wake of the Haiti earthquake." Sabah emphasizes "Haitian orphans are at risk of child traffickers. During chaotic times with many international groups, planes, supplies moving in and out of the airport and borders, there is a greater opportunity for human trafficking." Mainstream Milliyet headlines "They Kidnap Haitian Orphans and Make Them Slaves," and believes that "Haitian orphans are being trafficked out of the country to be used as slaves, beggars and prostitutes." Liberal Radikal gives the same message with the headline "Children's Lives Should Be Saved, Not Darkened."

Ambassador Jeffrey: Turkey - the US Can Raise Trade Three-Fold Wire agencies and dailies' websites report that in Istanbul yesterday evening, Ambassador Jeffrey joined a dinner held on the occasion of the sixth anniversary of the establishment of the American Business Forum in Turkey (ABFT). Ambassador Jeffrey said Turkey was a "great market for the US," and noted the two countries had around USD 15 billion of trade volume. "This figure could be raised by three-fold in a few years," the Ambassador reportedly said.

Crowley: Armenian Court Decision a Forward Step Mainstream Hurriyet reports State Department Spokesman Philip Crowley issued a statement which said the Armenian Constitutional Court decision was a "forward step" in the process for the ratification of the normalization protocols signed between Turkey and Armenia. The English-language daily Today's Zaman comments, "Following the Armenian Constitutional Court's January 12 decision which found the protocols in conformity with the Armenian Constitution, the Turkish side has been uneasy over the court's detailed reasoning for the decision."

The US Interpretation of Armenian Court Decision Surprises Ankara (Cumhuriyet)

In a news commentary, leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet reports Assistant Secretary Philip Gordon's remarks earlier this week, which interpreted the Armenian Constitutional Court decision on "normalization protocols" with Turkey as a "positive step" in the ratification process, made Ankara adopt a "wait-and-see" policy on the matter. In "The US Interpretation of Armenian Court Decision Surprises Ankara," Cumhuriyet says FM Davutoglu would meet Secretary Clinton at the Afghanistan conference in London today and ask the US to intervene on the Armenian decision. Ankara is also in contact with Switzerland over the issue according to Cumhuriyet. Mainstream Haberturk says Ankara is now waiting to see to what extent the Armenian court decision would "bind" the protocols and whether this decision would be "annexed" to the protocols during the voting in the Armenian Parliament. Haberturk also says Ankara is preparing a letter to send to the related countries which would stress that the Armenian court's decision risks the protocols not being enacted.

"Old Armenian Map" Crisis at Washington Seminar

Papers report a "historical" map of Armenia drew the reaction of Turks during a seminar held by George Washington University Law School, on "Turkey-Armenia: Protocols, Realities and Myths." An official from Turkey's Washington Embassy objected to an "old" map of Armenia used in the power point representation, which reportedly showed parts of Turkish land as Armenian land. Conference

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organizers apologized, saying they found the map on Google, says Cumhuriyet.

Editorial Commentary on Turkey-Armenia-the US

Soli Ozel in mainstream HaberTurk reported comments from a high level Turkish Foreign Ministry official who expressed concern over the Armenian court's ruling and underlined Ankara's expectation to see a clarification from Washington: "Despite Washington's statement on the court ruling, the MFA official still believes that Armenia is trying to put its internal legal interpretation above an international agreement. Turkey at this point waits for a written statement both from the US and from Switzerland which has to guarantee that protocol provisions will not be affected by the Armenian Court's ruling." On the other hand, the columnist thinks that Turkey can be left alone regarding its created linkage between the protocols and the Karabakh solution process.

Obama Will Meet 150 Muslim Entrepreneurs, Five From Turkey (Hurriyet)

Hurriyet reports that a global initiative launched by President Obama in Cairo on June 2009, will get underway in Washington on April 26-27. The paper reports that five Turkish entrepreneurs reflecting diverse businesses from food delivery to high tech have been selected to participate in the US Presidential Summit on Entrepreneurship.

Other Stories:

Appathurai: No NATO member Can Play Turkey's Role in Afghanistan (Cumhuriyet)

NATO spokesman James Appathurai has announced that the main topics of discussion at an upcoming informal gathering of defense ministers will be solution proposals for the situation in Afghanistan and an increase in NATO financial resources. Speaking at a press conference on Monday, he said the meeting will take place on Feb. 4-5 in Istanbul. He also stressed the significant role Turkey is playing in Afghanistan in both the political and military fields. "No NATO member can play the role Turkey has in Afghanistan -- especially not its political role," he said. Discussing the purpose of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) presence in Afghanistan, he said the ISAF's aim is not to find al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden but to ensure the security of NATO members by helping Afghans provide their own security. Unlike American forces in the country, NATO has never taken any direct steps to capture the leader of al-Qaeda because NATO's goal is to provide security and reconstruct Afghanistan to ensure the security of NATO members, he noted.

FM Davutoglu: "Criticizing Israel is not Anti-Semitism" (Vatan, Sabah)

Mainstream Vatan and Sabah report that responding to Israeli Foreign Ministry report accusing PM Erdogan of fueling anti-Semitism with his criticism of Israel, FM Davutoglu said "There was never ever anti-Semitism in Turkey's history, and will never be. We can never tolerate any kind of anti-Semitism or racism. Criticizing Israel is not anti-Semitism." Meanwhile, a Foreign Ministry statement referred to the UN recognition of January 27 as the Commemoration of the Jewish Genocide Victims, and said "we remember our diplomats with respect and honor, who sacrificed their own security and lives in order to protect the Jews from the Nazis during the second world war."

TRT to Launch Arabic Broadcasts in February

Mainstream Aksam reports Turkey's state-run broadcaster TRT will launch in February TRT Seba (Sheba), a new television channel in Arabic. Arab heads of state were invited to the opening. TRT has transferred 20 Arabic-speaking personnel from Egypt, Palestine, Tunisia and Algeria for the satellite broadcasts to cover the Middle East and the Arabian Peninsula. TRT Seba will reportedly be a "family channel" with music, news, movies, children's programs and documentaries.

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Newspaper Bloggers on Turkey-Israel Ties

Guest - hornblower (2010-01-26 20:47:09) :

I have many Jewish friends having grown up in New Jersey. Nonetheless I find Israel's actions at times alarming. I have many Iranians friends having visited Iran twice. Nonetheless I find the actions of Iran at times alarming. The point is clear, we need to remind ourselves and the people around us that our reactions and feeling to the actions of a state are not to be transferred to individuals. I don't see Erdogan hating Jews but rather questioning the actions of a Jewish state. Maybe I'm wrong. Love your neighbor as yourself. Love your enemies and bless those who persecute you.

Guest - wolf (2010-01-26 17:57:55) :

I do not see it as a problem that Erdogan is criticizing Israel for the Gaza issue. Any country should condemn violence. But the problem occurs that Erdogan is very inconsistently ONLY CONDEMNS ISRAEL. If Erdogan wants to condemn violence, how can he then at the same time invite genociders? And how can he be best buddy with Iran, a notorious human rights and democracy violator? Or Syria? And how about Hamaz (labeled a terror organization)? Or the Talibans or Al Qaida, why are they not condemned? Why is he not condemning those cases which are far worse? That is the problem and to which we can see no justifiable answer.

Guest - Rich (2010-01-26 15:23:19) :

It doesn't take an Israeli Government report to tell us what we all believe. Whether or not PM Erdogan is an anti-Semite or not- he has created the environment which has unleashed anti-Semitism in Turkey. If all someone can talk about is Israeli actions in Gaza- in the face of a world full of violence- one has to question the motive of the speaker. It is not a conclusion Jews or Israelis or Westerners are happy to reach. It is however obvious. We are all convinced ties will not improve while PM Erdogan is in power and so we must patiently wait for Turkish democracy to create a better environment. One should also consider Erdogan's fan club- so many who come from the Jew hating world- Iran, Hamas, Hezbollah, Al Qaida, Sudan, etc.

Guest - Murat (2010-01-26 15:02:49) :

Since PM has been careful to focus his comments solely on Israel's policy in Gaza, then it is fair to say that Israel's own policies in the region are fueling anti-semitism. Now that is a credible claim. Erdogan's statements are in effect no different than what UN or EU have said on the same topic. Problem is not Erdogan or AKP but it is Gaza.

TV Spotlight (CNN Turk)

Ambassador Huseyin Dirioz, currently a presidential foreign policy adviser, is likely to be given the post of NATO Deputy Secretary General.

Kurdish BDP group chief Nuri Akman accused the government of seeking revenge by arresting the mayors of cities where the AK Party suffered defeat in the municipality elections.

On January 28, Prime Minister Erdogan will hold a meeting with the "Tekel" workers on strike.

Opposition CHP leader Deniz Baykal likens the allegations for military coup to a "soap opera."

Prime Minister Erdogan said Greek PM Papandreou's response to his letter "inspired hopes" for the settlement of problems in the Aegean.

A delegation from the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture has paid a visit to Imrali Island to examine the prison conditions of the PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan.

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The residents of Aleppo celebrate the execution of Ali Hassan al-Majid, known as Chemical Ali, who was sentenced to death for ordering the gassing of 5,000 Kurds in 1988.

French lawmakers recommend a partial ban on any veils including the burqa that cover the face.

Israeli Information and Diaspora Minister Yuli Edelstein said Israel told the UN chief it will not conduct an independent probe of the Gaza war as demanded by a UN report.

German magazine Der Spiegel says Iran is serious about developing a nuclear bomb and has the ability to produce a primitive version of the bomb this year.

JEFFREY